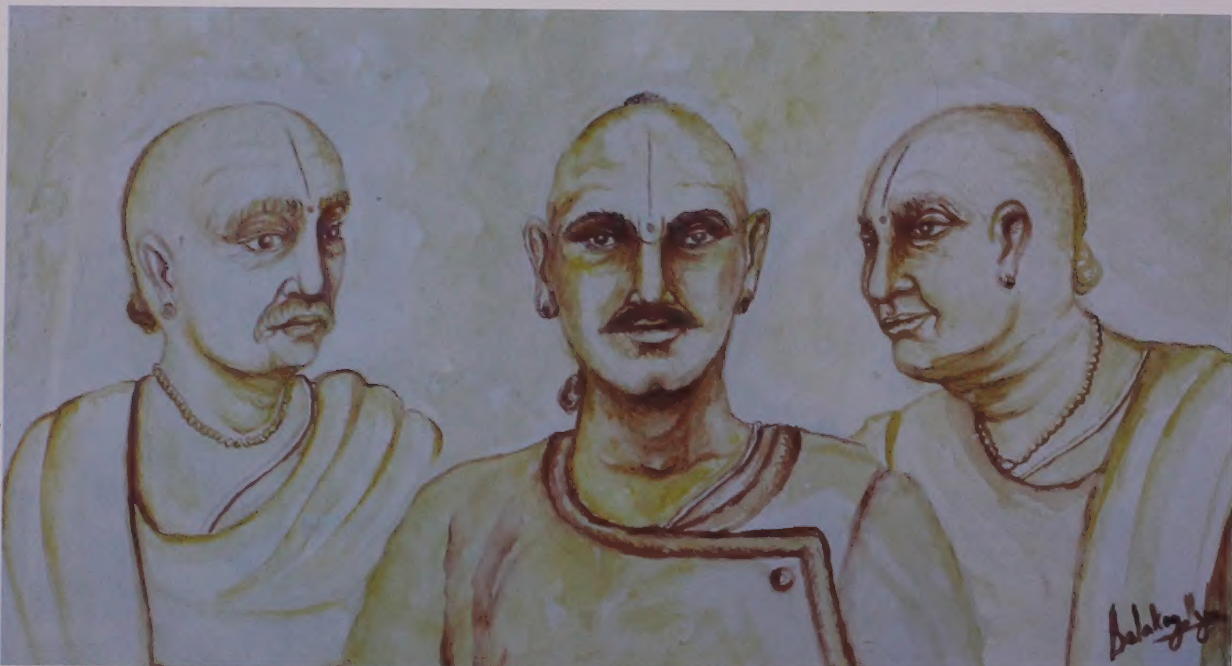
HORTUS MALABARICUS
&
the Contribution of Konkanis

N Balakrishna Mallya



Translated from the original in Malayalam
by Pratima Asher M.A. PhD.
In association with the Author

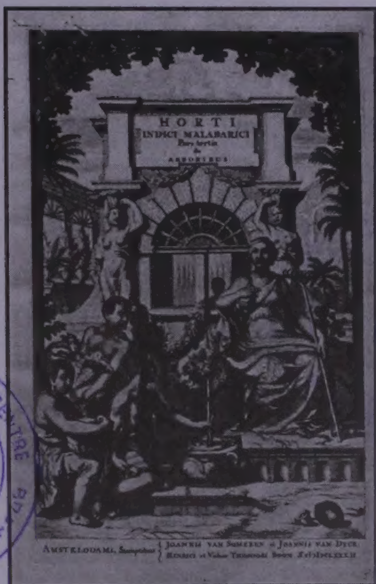
Artist : N Balakrishna Mallya

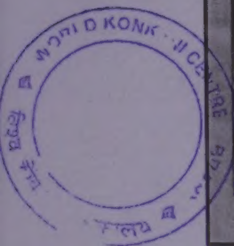


Ranga Bhat Vinayak Pandit Aapu Bhat

HORTUS MALABARICUS
and the
Konkani Contribution

N Balakrishna Mallya





With love & Respect to Shri. Basti Vamana Shenoy
29/12/12
N. Balakrishna Mallya

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Hortus Malabaricus and the Konkani Contribution

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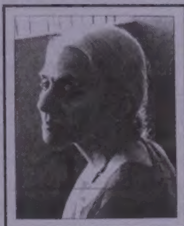


N BALAKRISHNA MALLYA

Born in Cochin in 1974, he is a Konkani poet, story writer and artist. A history enthusiast right from childhood, he has been interested in the history of the Konkanis and their language. In this research oriented study on that great botanical treatise written 335 years ago – the *Hortus Malabaricus*, he has attempted to clear what he believes are historical misconceptions on the work and the part played in its writing by the Konkanis, and backing his conclusions with evidence and opinion, he has put forth his findings before other researchers in this book.

Why has the historian who has walked through many ways ignored this aspect of the work he asks, and points towards a path along which more investigation is required. It is with this intention that he presents this book before you.

About the Translator



PRATIMA ASHER is a Mattancherry based writer. She has also taught in colleges in Mumbai and Kochi.

Author's Preface

Today's generation must become aware of the times that have gone by and a study of history aims at creating this awareness. Historical data must be understood through an exact and correct use of our intelligence and by looking at things from every direction. If we do so it will be possible to present before the public the real truth behind the facts. It is true that in the absence of historical details, sometimes historical truths may remain veiled or may be misinterpreted but we observe that very often even when correct and clear cut historical facts are available, the truth is presented in a distorted manner. As a result of this error many happenings in history remain in the dark and proper research must be carried out with the intention of getting a clear view of the facts.

I have written poetry and short stories and done paintings. To give my poetry weight, I felt that I should back it with the old writings in the Konkani language, available in old documents. I was very eager to get hold of these. But due to many reasons, gathering authoritative documents turned out to be difficult, the main reason being that I did not have enough contacts.

But with the help of my friend, artist Shri. Dinesh R. Shenoy, I got hold of a Konkani testimony included in a work written 335 years ago – the *Hortus Malabaricus*, and an English translation of this testimony. Is the Konkani language used in the testimony the same as the Konkani language spoken in Cochin today, or the language used by me in my poems? Is it the same or does it seem the same, I tried to endeavour to find out.

In the testimony all the words are combined together without spacing or gaps. I separated them in the way I know or have learnt them, using the Konkani that is prevalent in Cochin today, and I began to understand them. When I looked at the English translation I realized that the difference between the original testimony and the English one was very wide. This led me to acquire many doubts about the latter. How could I get an answer to these doubts? I began to think about them, searching for answers. This search led to a path filled with new questions and the answers to the new questions sowed the seeds of a search along a newer path. Many facts began to reveal themselves coming from many directions. To give what I said authority, I based my findings on the above mentioned testimonies and a book titled "ഹോർത്തൂസ്

മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത്" **[Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu]** by Dr. Philip Mathew, published in 2007 by the Centre for Heritage Studies, Hill Palace, Kochi.

In my book I present before readers and historians, the doubts and questions which rose in my mind. In this book, to the many questions which are raised, I myself have, through several arguments tried to find the answers. This has not been done with any intention to discard or negate any evidence available with readers or historians, or any community, caste or religion or to divide any one, or to diminish the value of the *Hortus Malabaricus* or the many attempts to write about it by people belonging to many sections, be they Indians or foreigners. There is no negative intention behind the writing of my book. My intention is solely to point out that we should, in historical writings inspect the available documents with greater depth and awareness. This has been my only motive.

In all historical writings, such documents are of immense value as they present those people who lived centuries ago, through their own handwritten testimonies. In the writing of such a great work as the *Hortus Malabaricus*, the Keralites who were included in its compilation definitely deserve to be given great importance. There can be no objection to that. But to present it as the only historical truth without giving equal importance to what the others have written? Why this neglect of the others? That was something I wanted to point out.

It was the testimony which goaded me to write about *Hortus Malabaricus*. This I got along with its translated copy as well as Dr. P.M.Mathew's book *Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu* published by the Centre for Heritage Studies, from my friend, the well known artist, Shri. Dinesh Shenoy. To my brother Shri. Naveenchandra Mallya, I owe gratitude and thanks for giving me much encouragement in my task, through discussion etc., awakening and raising the level of my thought processes, bringing to them greater clarity and enabling me to give my views a wide reach.

Kochi.
06th August, 2010

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Preface

by

Prof. (Dr.) K.K.N.Kurup (Former Vice Chancellor of Calicut University, Former Director General of Centre for Heritage Studies) to the book *"Hortus Malabaricusum Konkanigalude Pangum"*

അവതാരിക

സമീപകാലത്തായി സെന്റർ ഫോർ ഹെറിറ്റേജ് സ്റ്റഡീസിന്റെയും അതി ന്റെ ഡയറക്ടർ ജനറലായ ഈ ലേഖകന്റെയും ആഭിമുഖ്യത്തിൽ 17–ാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ ഔഷധ സസ്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റിയുള്ള ഡച്ച് ഗവേഷണ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളുടെ ഫലമായി രൂപപ്പെടുത്തിയ "ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – കേരളത്തിലെ സസ്യാരാമം" എന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥ പരമ്പര ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്ന വിജ്ഞാന ശാഖ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൽ അത്യന്തം താത്പര്യം കാണിക്കുകയുണ്ടായി. കേരള സർക്കാരിന്റെ കേരള ശാസ്ത്ര സാങ്കേതിക പാരിസ്ഥിതിക കൗൺസിലിന്റെ കീഴിൽ ഇതേ പേരിൽ ഒരു ഉദ്യാനം സസ്യശാസ്ത്രപരമായ ഔഷധ വിജ്ഞാന മേഖലയെ വിപുലപ്പെടുത്തുവാൻ 2008–ൽ ഹിൽ പാലസ് കേന്ദ്രമാക്കി ആരംഭിച്ചു. ഫോർട്ട്കൊച്ചിയുടെ സമീപപ്രദേശമായ തൃപ്പൂണിത്തുറയിലെ കൊച്ചി രാജാക്കന്മാരുടെ ആസ്ഥാനമാണ് ഹിൽ പാലസ്. ഇത്തരം പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ തുടർന്നു മറ്റു പല കേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിലും ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് എന്ന പേരിൽ ഔഷധത്തോട്ടങ്ങൾ വെച്ചു പി ടിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തു വരുന്നു. ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് എന്ന ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തെപ്പറ്റി ചില വിവാദങ്ങൾ പലപ്പോഴും ഉയർന്നു വന്നിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഡോ. മണിലാൽ ലത്തീൻ ഭാഷയിൽ നിന്നും ഇംഗ്ലീഷിലേക്കു പരിഭാഷപ്പെടുത്തുകയും കേരള സർവ്വകലാശാല 12 വോള്യങ്ങളായി പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത ഹെൻഡ്രിക്ക് ആൻഡ്രിയാൻ വാൻ റീഡിന്റെ പ്രേരണയിലെഴുതപ്പെട്ട ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസിന്റെ രചനയിൽ മലയാളിയും വൈദ്യ വിശാരദനുമായ കൊല്ലാട്ട് ഇട്ടി അച്ചുതന്റെ പേർ മാത്രമേ പ്രാമുഖ്യത്തോടെ സൂചിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുള്ളു. ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിന്റെ രചനയിൽ 16 പേരടങ്ങുന്ന സംഘവും ഒരു ദ്വിഭാഷിയുമുണ്ടായിരുന്നതായി പ്രസ്താവിക്കപ്പെടുന്നു. അവരിൽ സ്വദേശികളായ നാലു പേരുടെ വിവരങ്ങൾ മാത്രമേ ലഭിക്കുന്നുള്ളു. ഈ നാലു പേരിൽ മറ്റു മൂന്നു പേർ കൊങ്കണി സാരസ്വത ബ്രാഹ്മണരായ രംഗഭട്ട്, വിനായക പണ്ഡിറ്റ്, ആപ്പു ഭട്ട് എന്നിവരാണ്. ഈ മൂന്നു പേരുടെ സേവന പാരമ്പര്യവും അവർ ഈ ഗവേഷണ പദ്ധതിയിൽ എങ്ങനെ പങ്കെടുത്തുവെന്നും ഇപ്പോൾ വേണ്ടത്ര പ്രതിപാദിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ ചെയ്യുന്നില്ല.

ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ പ്രസ്തുത ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിലെ കൊങ്കണി ഭാഷയിലുള്ള സാക്ഷ്യപത്രവും ഒപ്പുകളും വിശകലനം ചെയ്ത് ശ്രീ എൻ. ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യ നടത്തിയ ഗവേഷണ പഠനമാണ് "ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസും കൊങ്കണികളുടെ പങ്കും" എന്ന ഈ ലഘു ഗ്രന്ഥം. ചരിത്രകാരന്മാരും വിവർത്തകന്മാരും ഹോർത്തൂസിലെ ചരിത്രരേഖകളെ സൂക്ഷ്മമായി പരിശോധിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെന്നും മേൽപ്പറഞ്ഞ മൂന്നു കൊങ്കണി വിദഗ്ധരെ വൈദ്യവിശാരദന്മാരായി പരിഗണിച്ചിട്ടില്ലെന്നതു തെറ്റാണെന്നും ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യ തന്റെ ഈ പ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ

വെളിപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ഒരു ഗവേഷകൻ എന്ന നിലയിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ വാദമുഖങ്ങൾ തികച്ചും ശരിയാണുതാനും. ലത്തീനിൽ നിന്നും ഇംഗ്ലീഷിലേക്ക് വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്ത ഡോ.മണിലാൽ "സ്വദേശികളായ നാലു പണ്ഡിതന്മാരിൽ ഇട്ടി അച്ചുതൻ മാത്രമാണ് വൈദ്യൻ എന്നു രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. മറ്റു മൂന്നു പേർ കൊങ്കണി ബ്രാഹ്മണർ" എന്നാണ് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്. (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത്, പേജ്, 25). ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യയുടെ പ്രധാന വാദമുഖം ഈ മൂന്നു പേർ ഈ ഗവേഷണ പദ്ധതിയുമായി എങ്ങനെ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടുവെന്നതാണ്. ഇട്ടി അച്ചുതൻ വൈദ്യൻ നൽകിയ വിവരങ്ങൾക്കനുബന്ധമായി അഭിപ്രായം പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നവരായി മാത്രമാണ് ഈ വൈദ്യന്മാരെ ഡോ. മണിലാൽ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂ. എന്നാൽ വാൻ റീഡ് ഗ്രന്ഥ രചനക്കായുള്ള ഉദ്യമത്തിനു തുടക്കം കുറിക്കുമ്പോൾ തന്നെ ഫാദർ മാത്യുവുമായി കൂടിയാലോചിച്ച് കൊങ്കണി വൈദ്യന്മാരായ ഈ മൂന്നു പേരോടും കൊച്ചിയിൽ വന്നു സഹകരിക്കുവാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നുവത്രേ. വാൻ റീഡ് ഇവരിൽ ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരാളെയല്ല, മറിച്ച് ഈ മൂന്നു പേരെയും ഒരുമിച്ച് കണ്ടിരുന്നതായി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു. ഇവർ മൂന്നു പേരും ഒരുമിച്ചാണ് ഈ ഉദ്യമത്തിൽ പങ്കുചേരുകയും അവസാനം സാക്ഷ്യപത്രത്തിൽ ഒപ്പു വെക്കുകയും ചെയ്തത്. അവർ ഇട്ടി അച്ചുതനെപ്പോലെ കൊച്ചിയിലെ പ്രധാന വൈദ്യരത്നങ്ങളായിരുന്നുവെന്നു കാണാം.

അതുപോലെ വിവർത്തകൻ, വിനായക പണ്ഡിറ്റ് എഴുതിയ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രത്തിൽ 'ശാലീവാഹന ശക' എന്നത് 'പാലീവാന പേകോ' എന്നും 1597 എന്നത് 1595 എന്നും 'രാക്ഷസ സംവത്സരം' എന്നത് 'റക്യൂകാവോ' എന്നും ആക്കി മാറ്റിയിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ശകവർഷം 1597 എന്നത് 1595 എന്ന് മാറ്റി എഴുതിയത് തെറ്റാണെന്നും 1675–ന്റെ ശകവർഷം 1597 (1675–78 = 1597) തന്നെയാണെന്നത് വിവർത്തകൻ അറിയാതെ പോയതാണെന്നും ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യ ചൂണ്ടി കാണിക്കുന്നു. ആയതിനാൽ കൊങ്കണി ഭാഷയിലുള്ള സാക്ഷ്യപത്രം 1675 ഏപ്രിൽ 18 നും 19 നും ഇടയിൽ തന്നെ എഴുതിയതാണെന്നും മറ്റുള്ളവ ഏപ്രി ൽ 20 നാണ് എഴുതിയതെന്നും മനസ്സിലാക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. കൂടാതെ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രമെഴുതിയ തീയതി 'ചൈത്രബഹുള ദശമി' എന്ന് എഴുതിയതിനാൽ അത് ഏപ്രി ൽ 18 അല്ലെങ്കിൽ 19 ന് ആദ്യമെഴുതിയ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രമാണെന്നും പരിഗണിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ട്. കൂടാതെ സാക്ഷ്യ പത്രത്തിൽ തങ്ങൾ മൂന്നു വൈദ്യർ എന്നു വ്യക്തമായി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയെങ്കിലും നഗ്നസ ന്യാസ സമൂഹത്തിലെ ബ്രാഹ്മണർ എന്നർത്ഥത്തിൽ Gymnosophist Brahmins എന്ന പദം ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്തി വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്തതും തെറ്റാണെന്ന് ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യ സമർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു. എന്തെന്നാൽ വിനായക പണ്ഡിറ്റ് സ്വന്തം സമൂഹത്തെ ഇത്തരത്തിൽ അവഹേളിക്കുകയില്ലെന്ന യാഥാർത്ഥ്യം നിലനിൽക്കുന്നു. വൈദ്യന്മാരായ ഇവർ മൂന്നു പേരും കൂടി വിത്തുകളും മറ്റും കണ്ടറിഞ്ഞ് ശേഖരിക്കുവാൻ അറിയുന്ന ഒരാളെ അയച്ചുവെന്നാണെന്നും ആ മൂന്നു പേർ ഒരാളല്ലെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

കൊങ്കണി ഭാഷയിൽ സ്വന്തം കൈപ്പടയിൽ വിനായക പണ്ഡിറ്റ് എഴുതിയ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രം പോർച്ചുഗീസിലേക്കും പിന്നീട് ലാറ്റിനിലേക്കും വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്തപ്പോൾ അവർ ഒപ്പുവെച്ച സാക്ഷ്യപത്രത്തിലില്ലാത്ത 'മനഹാനിങ്ഘട

നം' എന്ന പദം കടന്നു വന്നത് ആശ്ചര്യകരമാണെന്നും ഡോ.മണിലാൽ പറയുന്നതു പോലെ അത് മഹാനിഘണ്ടുവായിരിക്കണമില്ലെന്നതും കൂടി ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യ എടുത്തു കാട്ടുന്നു. കൊങ്കണി വൈദ്യന്മാരുടെ ഗവേഷണ പങ്കാളിത്തം മൂല്യം കുറച്ചു കാണുവാനുള്ള പോർച്ചുഗീസ് പരിശ്രമമായിരിക്കാമിതെന്നും ഈ ഗവേഷകൻ സംശയിക്കുന്നു.

കൊച്ചിയിലെ കൊങ്കണിമാർ 1540–നു മുമ്പു തന്നെ മട്ടാഞ്ചേരിയിലെ ഗോശ്രീപുരത്തിൽ പ്രബലമായ ഒരു സമൂഹമായി ഉയർന്നു വന്നിരുന്നു. വാണിജ്യത്തിലും അതുപോലെ സാംസ്കാരിക പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളിലും ക്ഷേത്രനിർമ്മാണത്തിലുമെല്ലാം അവർ തങ്ങളുടേതായ ആധിപത്യം നിലനിർത്തിയിരുന്നുവെന്നു ഡച്ച് രേഖകളും കൊച്ചി രാജവംശ രേഖകളും വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു. ഗോശ്രീപുരം എന്ന അവരുടെ ക്ഷേത്ര സങ്കേതം വളരെ പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള ഒന്നായിരുന്നു.

ഇത്തരം പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ ഈ സമൂഹത്തിലെ മൂന്നു വൈദ്യപണ്ഡിതന്മാരെ കൂടി തന്റെ ഗവേഷണ പദ്ധതിയിൽ വാൻ റീഡ് പങ്കെടുപ്പിച്ചതായി കരുതാവുന്നതാണ്. എന്നാൽ കൊങ്കണി ഭാഷയിലുള്ള സാക്ഷ്യ പത്രങ്ങളുടെ വിവർത്തനം ഇവരുടെ പ്രാധാന്യത്തെ അവഗണിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന വിധത്തിലായിപ്പോയെന്നു തീരുമാനിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഏതായാലും ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യയുടെ വാദമുഖങ്ങൾ രേഖാപരമായും ചരിത്രപരമായും ശരിയാണെന്നു സിദ്ധാന്തിക്കേണ്ടി വരുന്നതിൽ അത്യന്തം സന്തോഷമുണ്ട്. ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കുസിന്റെ വിവർത്തനങ്ങളെ വിലയിരുത്തുമ്പോൾ കൊങ്കണി വൈദ്യ വിശാരദന്മാരായ ഈ മൂന്നു പേർ നൽകിയ സംഭാവനകളെ പരിഗണിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ഇത്തരം മഹത്തായ ഒരു ഗവേഷണ പദ്ധതി അനേകം പേരുടെ കൂട്ടു യത്നത്തിന്റെ ഫലമാണെന്ന് പറയേണ്ടതില്ലല്ലോ. ഈ വസ്തുത ഓർമ്മപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിൽ ശ്രീ ബാലകൃഷ്ണ മല്ല്യയുടെ ഈ ഗവേഷണപരമായ യാത്ര തികച്ചും പ്രാധാന്യമർഹിക്കുന്നുവെന്നു രേഖപ്പെടുത്തട്ടെ.

തൃപ്പൂണിത്തുറ,
10. 9. 2010

പ്രൊഫ. (ഡോ.) കെ.കെ.എൻ. കുറുപ്പ്
(കാലിക്കറ്റ് സർവ്വകലാശാല മുൻ വൈസ് ചാൻസലർ)
ഡയക്ടർ ജനറൽ, സെന്റർ ഫോർ ഹേറിറ്റേജ് സ്റ്റഡീസ്.

HORTUS MALABARICUS

A diverse variety of vegetation exists on earth and much of it has medicinal value. In that age when the knowledge of such plants was scanty in most parts of the world, in India the science of medicine was already advanced, wide spread and had branched out in many directions. The common man was familiar with good health practices and regulated his life style and dietary habits according to climatic conditions and the change and passing of seasons. Astonished by the effectiveness of Ayurveda in ordinary life, foreigners travelled vast distances to reach this place in search of its secrets. Every type of wealth and much abundance could be found here, health and good food habits. This naturally attracted outsiders and they came to this land for the purpose of trade and commerce. An outcome of this was that it led to many attacks on the people of this land. Foreigners however began to believe that the more they attacked the people of this land, the stronger they grew and the more strongly they repulsed the attack. The warriors used their grasp of herbal medicines and the ability of their physicians in this field to protect themselves and this amazed the outsiders.



It proved to be an impediment to their desire to conquer India, and so there was a great deal of eagerness to understand and acquire this knowledge of herbal medicine, by any means, for themselves. It was this desire that led Hendrik Adriaan Van Rheede tot Draakenstein, the Governor of the Dutch East India Company in Malabar to undertake the task of gathering this knowledge. The story of *Hortus Malabaricus* begins at this juncture.

HENDRIK ADRIAAN VAN RHEEDE TOT DRAAKENSTEIN

Hendrik Van Rheede, the son of Ernst van Rheede and Elisabeth van Utenhove was born in the Utrecht province of the Netherlands in 1636. He studied with the Christian congregation of Amsterdam till he was 14 years old and joined the Dutch East India Company at the age of 20,as

an officer. In 1657, he set out for the Eastern countries and visited the Cape of Good Hope. There he acquired familiarity with the works of the botanical scientists, Johan Bax van Herentals and Isaac de l'Ostal de Saint-Martin and developed a great deal of enthusiasm for herbal research. Rijckloff Van Goens was the Governor of the Company's Eastern Command in Batavia at the end of 1657 and it was during Van Goen's tenureship that Van Rheede began to work in Batavia.

In those days the Dutch there, suffered from many ailments. No medicines that were brought over from the Netherlands were effective, so the Dutch began to develop an interest in Asian medicines and their curative properties and they gave them wide publicity. They also immediately started to stockpile these drugs.

This was a period when Van Goens and the Dutch had set their eyes on widening their borders in Asia, and without wasting a moment they turned their attention towards Malabar (the stretch of land from Goa to Kanyakumari – 845 k.m. long [525 miles] was then known as Malabar). The Dutch came to Cochin in 1660 and the Cochin Raja's kinsman, Veera Kerala Varma and the Dutch became friends. The position of the Dutch grew stronger as the services rendered by the Dutch to the King were greater than that of other foreigners. When Van Rheede became Governor, his officers came from noble families and were clever and intelligent, and they could establish good relations with the Cochin Raja with whom they acquired some leverage.



Van Goens captured Kodungallur (Cranganore) from the Portuguese and in 1662 in the war of Mattancherry, the captured Rani Gangadhara Lakshmi, the aunt of Veera Kerala Varma was made to promise that she would facilitate Veera Kerala Varma's ascension to the throne. The City of Cochin and the Fort were seized from the Portuguese and Veera Kerala Varma was installed as the Raja of Cochin. Van Rheede's value rose and he became a member of the ruling council. He had dreamt of compiling a book on the medicinal plants of Malabar and to fulfill this dream he took advantage of the prevailing situation.

A Journey into the Making of *Hortus Malabaricus*

The variety and abundance of the flora of Malabar surprised him. He wanted it researched and studied and he wanted to publish the findings in the form of a book. He took up the task.



This land covered an area which was above 888 km. He had to find people who had knowledge of its flora and were scholarly medical experts, and bond them together in a group. He tried to find people who used their language, translators, people who learning the language from the physicians, would gather this knowledge, who were fit to scrutinize it, to understand it and people who were artists, who could make drawings of the plants. He had to face many controversies from among his own compatriots and to surpass many impediments.

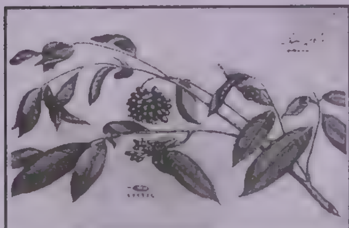
16 people were chosen and grouped together along with a translator. As they came from different provinces in Malabar, the members of the group were unfamiliar with each other. Yet if any error of difficulty or doubt arose, they did not hesitate to point it out or clarify it.

Thus began the writing of *Hortus Malabaricus*, that tome which we may believe was the first botanical treatise of its kind. The participating group went to each place or deputed other people to gather medicinal herbs, removing them from their roots. These were brought in, and their flowers, fruits, buds, stems, leaves and roots were scrutinized and subjected to research. The findings were coordinated with what they knew from their own experience and with the evidence available from medical texts on which they could base their conclusions. They then proceeded to hand these over to other respective members of the group. They who had from their childhood memorized verses or "*slokas*" on the plants and their properties, related the relevant verses regarding the herb and started a debate on it. They then drew pictures of it and wrote about it, producing a document with drawings and a commentary.

780 plants are documented in the book with their details given in Latin. The work consists of 12 volumes, with 791 pictures (the names of the plants are given in Malayalam, Konkani, Portuguese, Dutch and Arabic). It is printed in Folio size (the pictures are in double folio) and contains a total of 1616 pages. The volumes were published separately, one at a time and

the period taken to publish them was from 1678 to 1693. (Vol I – 1678; Vol II – 1679; Vol III – 1682; Vol IV – 1683; Vol V – 1685; Vol VI – 1686; Vol VII & VIII – 1688; Vol IX – 1689; Vol X – 1690; Vol XI – 1692 and Vol XII – 1693). The last two volumes of this dream project were published after Van Rheede passed away on the 15th December, 1691.

Some Important Facts about the *Hortus Malabaricus*





Over 330 years ago, even before the publication of the *Hortus Malabaricus*, two other books on a similar subject had been brought out by foreigners. Garcia da Orta was a medical officer in Goa and a merchant dealing in spices and gems. In 1563 was published, da Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicinais da Índia*. The second book was Cristóbal de Acosta's volume entitled *Tratado de las drogas y medicinas de las Indias Orientale*, and it was published from Burgos in Spain in 1578. In these volumes in Portuguese, more than a hundred variety of flora are described while in the *Hortus Malabaricus* are included descriptions of 780 varieties. Naturally it acquired more importance and renown.

This book is different from the ones written by the other foreigners, and through it an idea of the social set up of this part of India – *Malabar*, is available. The Dutch already had some notion of the history and the many splendoured and diverse medical knowledge of this land and this book considerably expands their perception of it. Not only that but included in this great work are also the names of the physicians and their testimonials.

മലയാളഭാഷ കോലെഴുത്തിലും ആര്യഴെത്തു ഗ്രന്ഥലിപിയിലും ആദ്യമായി അച്ചടിച്ചു എന്നു കരുതുന്ന ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ (മണിലാൽ – 1980), മലയാളം പോലെത്തന്നെ കൊങ്കണി, അറബി, പോർച്ചുഗീസ്, ഡച്ച്, ലത്തീൻ എന്നീ ഭാഷകളിൽ ചെടികളുടെ പേരുകൾ എഴുതിയതായി കാണുന്നു.

[Free Translation: Another aspect of the book that must be specially mentioned is that for the first time, it is said, the Malayalam language is being

published in a work in the "Kolezhuthu" and Aryezhuthu" scripts (Manilal, 1980), besides in Malayalam, the names of the plants are given (written) in the Konkani, Portuguese, Dutch and Arabic languages as well.]

Social Background of the *Hortus Malabaricus*

This was an age when those from foreign countries, notably from the European Kingdoms came for the purpose of trade and commerce but also with a mind to set up their own colonies here. The Portuguese arrived in Kerala, rooted themselves there and then went on to establish a colony and consequently their superiority in Goa.

It has already been mentioned above, that before the writing of the *Hortus Malabaricus*, two books dealing with Indian flora had been published. The authors of both these books were Portuguese. Then, let me point out first, the Konkani language was printed in the Roman script. The Portuguese had suppressed and banned the writing of Konkani in the Devanagari script. But in the third book published by the foreigners, the *Hortus Malabaricus*, the Konkani language occurs in its original Devanagari script. How did this came about? This is a question that should be examined.

In this context we must also examine in all ways, the points which come up under the following headings – the Portuguese Regime in Goa, the Portuguese and the Konkanis, (the Defeat and) the Exodus of the Konkanis, Cochin Konkanis, and the Dutch and the Konkanis.

The Portuguese Regime in Goa

Under the Portuguese regime in Goa, much injustice was done to the people, and the pages of history are filled with proofs of this. Many laws were passed which suppressed the linguistic and religious freedom of the people.

The famed historian, Dr. T. R. De Souza says: *"at least from 1540 onwards, all the Hindu idols disappeared because all the temples were destroyed and their sites and building materials were fully utilised to erect new Christian Churches and chapels. Various viceregal and Church council decrees banished the Hindu priests from the Portuguese territories; the public practices of Hindu rites including marriage rites, were banned; the State took upon itself the task of bringing up Hindu orphan children; the Hindus were denied many types of employment, while the Christians were preferred; it was ensured that the Hindus would not harass those who became Christians, and on the contrary, the Hindus were obliged to assemble periodically in Churches to listen to preaching or to the refutation of their religion."*

On April 2, 1560, Viceroy D Constantine de Braganca issued orders instructing that Brahmins should be thrown out of Goa and other areas under Portuguese control. They were given all of one month to dispose of all possessions. Anyone found violating the order would have their properties seized.

On February 7, 1575, Governor Antonio Morez Barreto declared that the estates of Brahmins whose "presence was prejudicial to Christianity" would be confiscated and used for *"providing clothes to the New Christians."*

In 1585, The Third Concilio Provincial which was a gathering of bishops and other Christian leaders adopted a resolution declaring, *"His Majesty the king has on occasion ordered the viceroys and governors of India that there should be no Brahmins in his lands, and that they should be banished therefrom together with the physicians and other infidels who are prejudicial to Christianity. As the orders of His Majesty in this regard have not been executed, great impediments in the way of conversion and the community of New Christians have followed and continue to follow. From now onwards at certain times in each year the archbishop should obtain information regarding Brahmins, physicians and any other infidels who might be prejudicial to conversion to Christianity, and in consultation with the Christian priests, prepare a roll of their names which should be signed by him. This should be presented to the viceroy or the governor in order that the latter might issue orders for banishing them from the lands of the king, as His Majesty has ordered..."*

The Third Concilio Provincial also demanded a ban on the traditional thread ceremony and the ban was imposed by the Sword. The Brahmins who tried to evade such prejudicial dictates by going outside Portuguese territory for the ceremony were prevented from doing so by the ominously threatening order that said *"I hereby order that no Hindu subject proceed beyond the borders of the state to celebrate the thread ceremony..."*

On December 15, 1572, the Viceroy ordered that the Hindu Pundits and Physicians should not move in the city on horseback or in *"andores"* - a kind of sedan chair or *"palki"*. Any Hindu who violated this provision was punished ruthlessly. In short Hindus were converted into slaves.

The Portuguese and the Konkanis

In Goa, the Portuguese destroyed the serenity of the life of the people, under the pretext that they were going to give them a new and better status. The writing of Konkani in the Devanagari script was stopped and banned, and rules were made to ensure the use of the Roman script. Precious books and

documents were set afire.

After Alfonso de Albuquerque conquered Goa on November 25, 1510, the Konkani Brahmins had to face a great deal of difficulty and cruelty. On April 2, 1560 the Viceroy ordered that the Konkani Brahmins should leave all the places in Goa which came under the rule and jurisdiction of the Portuguese regime, as well as the Forts. Similarly on November 27, 1563, a law was proclaimed which stated that all Hindu medical practitioners (Vaidyas), merchants and others, if they were not ready for conversion would be expelled from the border limits of the places under Portuguese rule. Many valuable documents and books belonging to them were set ablaze, temples destroyed and wealth confiscated. Many similar laws were enacted and practices initiated which made their lives arduous. Fed up with this state of affairs the Konkani Brahmins came to Kerala.

In his book **"Conversations and citizenry : Goa under Portugal, 1510-1610"**, Délio de Mendonça has this to say *"Between 1551 and 1554 the local nobles, rich clerks, Brahman merchants, doctors and wealthy businessmen, all great contributors to the revenues of the king, abandoned their houses and lands and went to live outside Goa. Interestingly, many neo-converts also left Goa. The reason for this drastic move had been forced conversions by the priests. The Jesuits began harassing the Hindus by cutting their hair tuft, forcing them to eat beef, and to go against their 'superstitions and idolatries', despite objections raised against such methods by the Dominicans and Franciscans."* (Page 256-257)

"The Hindus, especially the Brahmans, possessed great power and assumed airs of arrogance. When the decrees began to be implemented the Brahmans refused to accept their fate. Instead, Constantino de Bragança and others waited for his tenure to end. Their efforts availed them nothing. Then they closed their shops and persuaded the cultivators to destroy the dikes in the paddyfields to allow the salt water to fill them. After doing this they decided to leave Goa. They declared that forced conversion compelled them to take this decision .... After the expulsion or migration of the Hindus in 1559, the city of Goa contained very few Hindu inhabitants......" (Page 260)

Faced with such a predicament the Konkanis left Goa and fled to other places.

The Exodus of the Konkanis

Leaving Goa, the Konkanis, ran in many directions, many of them to the

southern districts (regions) of India – reaching Karnataka and Kerala. Those who came to Kerala, came first to Kozhikode (Calicut) and inspite of their desire to establish a settlement there, they found that the Samudiri was unwilling to give them protection considering the fact that the Portuguese influence there was substantial. Thus they proceeded to Cochin. Keshava Rama Varma (1565 – 1601) was the Raja of Cochin then and he gave them permission to stay there.

In those days, they who came to seek the protection of the King here, specially the Brahmins were given a place to settle down freely. In the case of the Konkanis they were given a marshy land (Cheru) from whence comes the name *Cherlai*, at a price of 3½ cash for each foot. (3½ cash was the equivalent of 1 small gold coin). Foreigners like the Jews were allowed to stay close to the Palace and given permission to build a synagogue at a time when the same dynasty was ruling. If we examine the history of the period we realize that the Konkanis were not given any status, they were regarded as second class citizens. It is also noticed that the Konkanis, even those who were Brahmins, were not allowed to enter the temples of the land. It could be deduced that the Portuguese were also responsible in this matter. Gradually, the Konkanis through their own efforts began to rise in the fields of trade and commerce and the Maharaja began to accord them greater status. They were also provided with greater comforts. Consequently, a closeness began to develop between the Konkanis and the King. This, along with other reasons began to cause ill-feeling among the Portuguese. In 1662 when the Portuguese attacked the Palace of the King of Cochin, they also attacked the Cochin Thirumala Devaswom (temple) and destroyed it. Together with it they destroyed the market place and the trading centre there. This cannot be looked upon as a mere coincidence.

After this, in 1662 in the War of Mattancherry, the Dutch offered protection to Veera Kerala Varma's kinswoman Gangadhara Lakshmi, and captured Cochin city and the Fort from the Portuguese, installing Veera Kerala Varma as the Raja of Cochin.

Cochin Konkanis

In the middle of the 16th century, the Konkanis who had come to Cochin, became in a short time an important group of people there. That they left an impression of their personality in many areas can be understood from several documents.

N.S. Ramaswamy remarks in his book "**Indian Monuments**" (Page 24 - 25) *"A learned visitor was Filippo Sassetti. A man of letters, he arrived in Cochin on*

November 9, 1583........ In a letter to one Bernardo Davanzati from Cochin on January 22, 1586, he makes the first remark on Sanskrit's resemblance to a European language, Italian; "All their (the Hindus') sciences are written in a language that they call 'Sanicuta', which means well articulated and which, although (as I say) their recollections are most ancient, they still cannot remember as being spoken. They learn as we do Greek or Latin, although it takes them much longer, six or seven years, to master it. The language they speak today has many things in common with that one, in which one finds many of our words, especially numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9, God, snake (sei, sette, otto e nove, Dio, serpe) and many others."

Which community group did Filippo Sassetti observe in Cochin? Who studied the language, 6-7 years, whose spoken language is akin to Sanskrit? Sassetti mentions that the words in the language they now speak has many words in common with that one in which one finds "many of our words". He mentions the numbers 6, 7, 8, 9 and the words "God" and "Snake". In Malayalam these words are "Aaru" (Mal. ആറ്), "Ezhu" (Mal. ഏഴ്), "Ettu" (Mal. എട്ട്), "Onpathu" (Mal. ഒമ്പത്), "Daivam" (Mal. ദൈവം), "Sarpam" (Mal. സർപ്പം). Compare the words for the numbers 6, 7, 8, 9 and "God", "Snake" *(sei, sette, otto e nove, Dio, serpe)*, with those that occur in Konkani sa (Kon. स), sāt (Kon. सात), āṭh (Kon. आट), navv (Kon. नव्व), deu (Kon. देउ), sarp (Kon. सर्प), We understand that the people were Konkanis.

The emigrant Konkani Brahmins from Goa, specially in Cochin, were not only priests. From early times they had established their ability in many fields. In Goa during the time they stayed there as well as in the Kingdoms of Kadamba, Hoysala and Vijayanagara, they occupied premier and important positions. Also many of them could be found in trade, commerce, industry and medical fields.

The Dutch and the Konkanis

There is historical evidence to indicate that after the Dutch arrived, the Konkanis began to enjoy greater freedom and encouragement. In 1663, after the treaty with the Cochin Raja was signed it was stated that the Konkani Brahmins would be protected by the Raja who agreed to look upon and treat them on equal terms with other Brahmins.

"...It is they who have helped us with money in times of danger. They shall not be dealt with except in the way in which the Brahmins are to be dealt with..." (**The Cochin Thirumala Devaswom Temple** by N Purushothama Mallaya

- page 37 Appendix 12)

Why was it mentioned that the Konkanis would be given greater power and rights? Wouldn't it have been enough to mention only to the Dutch and endow them with privileges? Not only this but by giving the Konkanis protection and freedom how did the Dutch benefit? This is something that may not seem easy to comprehend. The above treaty was signed during a period of great danger. The Konkanis had provided much monetary help, and the Maharaja himself admitted this.

From this it may be understood that at the time of writing the *Hortus Malabaricus*, the Konkanis were wealthy and wielded influence with the Maharaja and the Dutch.

The Unrevealed Historical Facts behind the *Hortus Malabaricus*

In the *Hortus Malabaricus*, Van Rheede aimed to gather knowledge about the different varieties of herbal plants that grew in the land between Goa and Kanyakumari in their own particular seasonal and climatic conditions, and to pass on this knowledge to medical practitioners and botanists in the countries outside India.

In the writing of this book among the group of 16 plus the translator only 4 indigenous people are mentioned and given prominence. Out of these, three are Konkani Sarswat Brahmins (Ranga Bhat, Vinayak Pandit and Aapu Bhat) and one is a Malayali Ezhava Chogan (Kolattu Itty Achuthan).

Historians have discussed in great detail the document written by Itty Achuthan, which is a part of the *Hortus Malabaricus.* So there is no need to go into greater detail about it here. There are many historians and linguists who can read Itty Achuthan's testimony written in his own handwriting in the *"Kolezhuthu"* script, as well as the documents by Carneiro.

There has however been no discussion regarding the document or testimony in Konkani by Ranga Bhat, Vinayak Pandit and Aapu Bhat. What I am going to do here, is to draw attention to this document hoping to throw light on what they have written.

The Document – A Detailed Scrutiny

The Konkani testimony has been greatly misunderstood even by historians, and different and controversial opinions have begun to emerge regarding it

and also regarding the role played by the three Konkani Brahmins in the writing of the *Hortus Malabaricus*. Without properly going into what the three have written, conducting a historical search into the *Hortus Malabaricus* will not be meaningful.

If we look at the testimony we will notice that there is no break or spacing or gap between the words in the writing and so it is difficult to read.

Certificate in Konkani language by
Ranga Bhat, Vinayaka Pandit & Appu Bhat

स्वस्तिश्री शालिवाहनशक १५९७ राक्षससंवत्सर चैत्रशुद्ध १० को
चीराजपाट्टणी वैस्सिके रंगभट्ट तथा विनायकपंडित आप्पभट्ट तेगे वैद्य
ताणिं कोचिवा कुमदोर आंड्रिक फान्ड्रेक्त्या वानि रोपान ह्यामलबार देशा
नु आनिले औषधमात्र वृक्षवालि झाडरुखउ ओळखतल्या मनुष्याकनु
स्मरोदेशनु तेजे गांवांतु पेट्टवून तितिं वोरवद आणवून त्यात्या झाडाचे फल
फूल पानबीज समस्त त्यान्यातु तुकाना वरिस पाहून तितींचि मारिली त्या उप
रांत आमि आम गेल्या वैद्यग्रंथाचानि चीटा प्रमाणी स्यांत्या ओषधाचे गुण
वाकनु मरानजो जो गुण आमकां कळेलो तो वात्यां आखदांची नावं पळेउनु
आनि वानि वर्षं सकान्ति साजे आमि लागिरावूनु द्यालिंगुस पाडून दिला तें ल
टिक अत्रिास्मणुंचा कनञ अत्रिास्मणु आमि आमचीं निसाणि करुणु दिली
ते सत्य द्वणु मानुवेंजाइ दद्यणु नागर बरपानह बरवूनु दिली श्री

रंग भट्ट विनायकपंडित आप्पु वी ओप

I give the meaning of the Konkani document as I understand it below, word by word and line by line in the Devanagari script followed by a similar rendering of the original in Malayalam and English.

स्वस्ति श्री शालिवाहन शक १५९७ राक्षस संवत्सर चैत्र बहुळ १० को

svasti śrī śālivāhana śaka 1597 rākṣasa saṁvatsara caitra bahuḻa 10 ko

ची राजपाटणी बैसिके रंगभट्ट तथा विनायक पंडित आपुभट्ट तेग वैद्य

cī rājapāṭaṇī baisike raṅgabhaṭṭ tathā vināyak paṇḍit āpubhaṭṭ teg vaidya

तानिं कोचिचा कुमदोर आड्रिकि फाड्रे त्याचा तिरोपान ह्या मलबारदेशा

tāniṁ kocicā kumador āḍriki phāḍre tyācā tiropān hyā malabāradeśā

तु आशिले ओषधमात्र वृक्ष वालि झाड खंड ओळखतेल्या मनुष्याक मु

tu āśile oṣadhamātra vṛkṣa vāli jhāḍ khaṇḍ oḻakhateḻyā manuṣyāk mu

सारो देवूनु तेते गांवांतु पेट्टवून तिंतिं वोखद आणवून त्यात्या झाडाचे फल

sāro devūnu tete gāṁvāntu peṭṭavūn tintiṁ vokhad āṇavūn tyātyā jhāḍāce phal

फूल पान बीज समस्त त्यात्या रुतुकाळावरि सपाटून तिंतीं चितारिली त्या उप

phūl pān bīj samasta tyātyā rutukāḻāvari sapāṭūn tintīṁ citārilī tyā upa

रांत आमि आमगेल्या वैद्यग्रंथाचानि घंटाप्रमाणिं त्यांत्या ओषधाचे गुण

rānt āmi āmagelyā vaidyagranthācāni ghaṇṭāpramāṇiṁ tyāntyā oṣadhāce guṇa

वा अनुभवान जोजो गुण आमकां कळेलो तो वा त्यां आखदांचीं नावं पळेउनु

vā anubhavān jojo guṇa āmakāṁ kaḻelo to vā tyām ākhadāñcīṁ nāvaṁ paḻeunu

आजि दानि वर्ष सकाळिं सांजे आमिं लागि रावूनु हालिव्नु सपाटून दिला तें ल

āji dāni varṣaṁ sakāḻiṁ sāñje āmiṁ lāgi rāvūnu hālivnu sapāṭūn dilā teṁ la

टिक अशि ह्मणुंचाक नज अशिह्मणु आमि आमंची निसाणि कर्णु दिली

ṭik aśi hmaṇuñcāk naja aśihmaṇu āmi āmañcī nisāṇi karṇu dilī

ते सत्य ह्मणु मानुचें जाइद ह्मणु नागरबरपान ह बरवूनु दिलां श्री

te satya hmaṇu mānuceṁ jāid hmaṇu nāgarabarapān ha baravūnu dilāṁ śrī

रंगभटु	विनायक पंडित	आपुचि ओप
raṅgabhaṭu	vināyak paṇḍit	āpuci op

Testimony in Konkani (Free Translation)

In the prosperous and auspicious Shalivahana era, in the Rakshasa year 1597, and on the 10th day of the month of Chaitra, Bahulam, we, Ranga Bhat, Vinayak Pandit and Aapu Bhat, the three physicians who stay in the royal city of Cochin (They) following the instructions of the Commander of Cochin Henry (Van Rheede) sent to various villages he who knew and could

recognize in this land of Malabar, those medicinal plants, the trees, creepers, roots, stems, paying coolie cash, to get those medicines and bring those trees, fruits, flowers, seeds and all, noting the particular seasons, and then we cleaned them and kept them in order and then drew the pictures. After this we, keeping our medical documents as evidence, and from our own experience, we noted the value of those medicines, for two years from morning to evening we stood besides them and gave directions and put things in order, making them error proof. This we ask you to believe and saying this we put our signature to it, saying this is the truth and we give it in writing in the nagari script. Shree

Ranga Bhat　　　Vinayak Pandit　　　Signature of Aapu

1. In this testimony it is stated that one who could recognize them was asked to bring the medicinal plants. The phrase used is ओळखतेल्या मनुष्याक (oḻakhatelyā manuṣyāk) – meaning the man who could recognize. Is it only one man? We think so. The word applied is in the singular person. If there was more than one person the phraseology used would have been ओळखतेल्ये मनुष्यांक (oḻakhatelye manuṣyāṅk) – meaning those people who could recognize. The three physicians together or the trio of physicians entrusted the responsibility to *one* who would recognize and gather the seeds etc.

- ഇവിടെ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ട കാര്യം വാൻ റീഡ് സസ്യങ്ങൾ ശേഖരിക്കുവാൻ അയച്ച ആളുകളെ "അവർ സസ്യങ്ങളെപ്പറ്റി നല്ല നിശ്ചയമുള്ളവരും, എത്ര ഉയരമുള്ള മരത്തിലും കയറി ചെടികൾ ശേഖരിക്കുവാൻ കഴിവുള്ളവരുമായിരുന്നു." (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 14)
  [Free Translation: What must be brought to notice here is what Van Rheede said about those sent to gather materials (seeds etc.) "They who knew a great deal about (medicinal) plants, with the ability to climb a tree however tall it was and to gather them."] **[Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 14]

- *"Itty Achudem, a physician from Karapurram, ... He belonged to the Chogans, a caste occupying itself with the profitable coconut industry. On account of their skill in climbing trees the Dutch also called them the 'tree climbers' ...... Van Rheede described as 'experts in plants, to whose care it was entrusted to*

collect for us finally from everywhere the plants with the leaves, flowers, and fruits, for which they even climbed the highest tops of the trees'." (**Hendrik Adriaan Van Reed Tot Drakestein 1636-1691 and Hortus Malabaricus** by J Heniger - Page 43)

2. He was given "Coolie" - मुसारो देवूनु (musāro devūnu) – money was arranged to be given मुसारो (musāro) equals मजूरि (majūri) or coolie cash. To state it fully : Money was arranged to be given by the three physicians together, to a person who was sent to bring materials from any tree or plant however tall it was.After the seeds etc. were gathered "We got them picturized (drawn), stood there and gave directions, and put everything in order". Such language gives us an idea of the status and position of the trio.

3. निसाणि (nisāṇi) – signature – निशानि (niśāni)

The document or testimony given above, is believed to have been translated into the Portuguese language by Vinayak Pandit himself. From this it was translated into Latin by Herman de Donep.

The English translation shown below is widely available and is also given by Manilal.

THIS IS

From the year 1595, called (named) by Brahmins *Palivanapaco* (which with us is the year 1674) to the 20th of April of the year called *Requecao* (which with us is 1675), I, Renga Batt, Vinayak Pandit and Appu Batt, all three from the race and religion of Brahmins and ancient Gymnosophists in the District of Cochin, as per the order of Noble Lord Henry a Rheede, Governor of Malabar Territories and of the City of Cochin, through our servants who have knowledge of trees, plants, herbs and creepers, caused them to be brought from the Malabar region with their flowers, fruits and seeds to the above mentioned city, in order that they may be drawn and described, the names of which are written in our book called *MANHANINGATTNAM* in which are contained their medicinal powers and properties and besides these, we have added to these whatever we have learned and observed by long experience and with great labour and sweat and in order that this book may be completed, we have worked for the space of almost two years, so that each and anybody who will read or see it, could have faith in it which he himself would have given, if he himself would have experienced the things written it it; we swear therefore according to our custom that all that is contained in it is true, in testimony of which we made these papers (documents) which we have signed with our own hands. Given in the city of Cochin, on the 20th day of April, 1675.

Ranga Batt   Vinayak Pandit   Appu Batt

Translated from the language of the Brahmins by the undersigned
VINAYAK PANDIT
into the Portuguese language,
and from Potuguese into Latin by me
CHRISTIAN HERMAN de DONEP
Civil Secretary of the City of Cochin.

Controversies

- *"....Statement in Konkani by the Brahmin physicians Ranga Botto, Vinaique Pandito, and Apu Botto, dated Cochin, 20 April 1675, followed by the Latin translation by Van Donep, based upon a Portuguese translation from Konkani by Vinaique Pandito..."* (**Hendrik Adriaan Van Reed Tot Drakestein 1636-1691 and Hortus, Malabaricus** by J Heniger - Page 100)

- *"മൂന്നു ബ്രാഹ്മണരും കൂടി കൊങ്കണിഭാഷയിൽ നാഗരി ലിപിയിലാണ് എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. ലാറ്റിനിലേക്ക് വിവർത്തനം ചെയ്ത അതേ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രം പോലെയാണ് ഇതിന്റെ ഉള്ളടക്കം."* (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 22)

  [Free Translation: "The contents of the testimony by the three Brahmins written in Konkani in the Nagari script was translated into Latin. The content in the Latin and the original is the same."] [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 22]

The testimony was translated into Portuguese allegedly by Vinayak Pandit himself. This is difficult to believe. Two Portuguese were involved in the writing of the book – A man called Emmanuel Carneiro and a missionary who came with the Portuguese – Father Mathew. When they were there why did Vinayak Pandit have to translate his document himself? Vinayak Pandit was a Brahmin. He had great familiarity with the Indian Astrological Charts or Almanacs. This is not seen at all in the translation. Not only this but this aspect is a mess in the translation. There is no connection between the handwritten document in Konkani and the translation. Moreover in the translation from Konkani to Portuguese and from Portuguese to Latin, the contents are dissimilar. Was the Civil Secretary of Cochin then, Christian Herman de Donep, the translator? Anyway he himself has stated that he has translated the document from Portuguese into Latin, so it must be believed that was not he who translated it into Portuguese.

It may be thought though, that the translator whoever he was, bore some enmity towards the Konkani Gowda Saraswat Brahmins (GSB). It was perhaps because of this that he noted that the three physicians who produced the document were Gymnosophist Brahmins. This category of Brahmins belong to a "Nagna Sanyasa Samooham" (like Naga Sanyasins) and the term "Gymnosophist Brahmins" was only used to degrade and put down the GSBs. Would Vinayak Pandit degrade his own community? It does not seem possible.

In the Konkani document in which Vinayak Pandit is a signatory, there is a

mention of the "śālivāhana śaka". In the translation it is "Palivanapaco", the year "1597" has become "1595" and "rākṣasa saṁvatsara" has become "Requecao". The greatest difference being that the "śaka" year 1597 has become 1595. It is common knowledge that by adding 78 years to the "śaka" year, the Christian Era can be obtained. Thus if this is the Christian year 2010, the "śaka" year will be 1932. If the Christian year is 1675 the "śaka" year will be 1597 (1675 - 78 = 1597). Even if the translator was unaware of this, at least the historian should have noticed and pointed out this error.

This document was written in accordance with the 60 year cycle of the Indian Calendar. In "śālivāhana śaka", the "rākṣasa saṁvatsara" or year is 1597, and 1675 - 76 according to the Western Calendar. The document or testimony was prepared and signed in the month of "caitra", "bahula" (kṛṣṇa pakṣa), "daśami". That is the first month of the year. After 25 days is the bahula 10. So the 25th day of the month of caitra has been completed. In the translation we have *"from the year 1595, called (named) by Brahmins Palivanapaco (which with us is the year 1674) to the 20th of April of the year called Requecao (which with us is 1675)"*. What is noticeable here is that the year has been split into two. The "rākṣasa saṁvatsara" started in the afternoon of the 26th of March 1675. It was not in 1674. ("rākṣasa saṁvatsara" was from 1675 March to 1676 March. 1674 - 75 was "āananda saṁvatsara").

The document in Konkani mentions the date "caitra bahula 10". On that day it was not the 20th of April 1675, because in that year the "caitra bahula" (kṛṣṇa pakṣa or the dark half of the lunar month), "daśami" (10) began in the evening after 5 O'clock and 29 minutes on 18/04/1675 and lasted upto 7 O'clock and 21 minutes in the evening of 19/04/1675. From this it can be understood that the document was written and signed between the 18th and 19th of April.

From an examination of the other testimonies one would understand that the testimonies were prepared on the 20th of April 1675. But if you take the above mentioned facts into consideration, the Konkani document was not written on the 20th of April 1675 (as we have said it was 18 - 19 April). The trio were the once who submitted it first it may be believed before the 20th.

- *''സ്വദേശികളായ 4 പണ്ഡിതന്മാരിൽ ഇട്ടി അച്ച്യുതൻ മാത്രമാണ് വൈദ്യൻ എന്നു രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. മറ്റു മൂന്നുപേർ കൊങ്കണി ബ്രാഹ്മണർ എന്നാണ് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത്.''* (മണിലാൽ – 1996). (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കുസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 25)

[Free Translation: "Of the four native scholars, Itty Achuthan is the only one described as a physician. The other three have been termed as Konkani Brahmins." (Manilal – 1996)] [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 25]

If the above statement is taken at face value, who were the other three and what was their role in the compilation of the book? We must consider how they contributed. The document written by them (not the translation) refers to them as "तेग वैद्य (teg vaidya)" or the "three vaidyas" meaning that the three were also physicians. Those who have researched this document or testimony in this state, should have considered the words in the Devanagari script, and it would have been better understood. It must be pointed out that it is high time that historians stopped taking only the translation as proof of what has been written. If this is the state of affairs concerning a document in a script which is used by the many people whose mother tongue is Hindi or Marathi, Konkani, Nepali and other similar languages, one can imagine what would be the state of affairs regarding those documents written in scripts like Brahmi which are no longer in use.

- *"source of the ancient ethno-medical knowledge of Kerala, culled from the hereditary palm-leaf manuscripts by Itty Achuthan, a famous traditional physician of Kerala of that time. Three Konkani priest-physicians, Ranga Bhat, Vinayaka Pandit and Appu Bhat, supplemented the information."* (**Van Rheede's Hortus Malabaricus** by K.S. Manilal, University of Kerala, 2003 - Page viii)

Here it appears that the three Konkani physicians only supplemented Itty Achuthan's work. In this context the statement given below should be noted.

J. Heniger in his book **Hendrik Adriaan Van Reed Tot Drakestein 1636- 1691 and Hortus, Malabaricus** mentions what the Secretary *Vincenzo Maria* remarked about the three Konkani physicians. *"The meetings between the two men in 1673 and 1674 must also have led to the plan of composing together a work on the Malabar flora, for already in 1674 Van Reede asked the Brahmins Ranga Botto, Vinaique Pandito, and Apu Botto to come to Cochin to collaborate on Hortus Malabaricus".* (Page 40).

When the writing of the book was being discussed between the two men, Father Mathew and Commander Van Rheede, it can be seen that the three Konkani Brahmins had already been requested to gather in Cochin and collaborate in its making. It may thus be thought that they were the most prominent physicians (Vaidyas) in Cochin, because Van Rheede couldn't possibly

have entrusted the compilation of such an important volume to persons who had no knowledge of the subject.

In the document written in April 1675, it can be noticed that it is said that the three people worked on the volume for two years. From this and what is said above, we may conclude that Van Rheede had nominated the physicians for this work, not in 1674, but in 1675 itself.

These three were natives of Cochin as they themselves reveal in their own document कोची राजपाटणी बैसिके (ko cī rājapāṭaṇī baisike). From there they must have come to Cochin Fort where Van Rheede was living and that is the Cochin to which they were asked to come as stated in the quotation given above. Van Rheede met not one, but all three together as it must be pointed out and that they got together and signed the testimonial proof themselves, together. From this it may be considered that they worked on it together and we can term them as the "trio of physicians".

Again, in the preface to the *Hortus Malabaricus*, they are called "Doctorum".

- *പല വ്യാഖ്യാനങ്ങളിലും ഗ്രന്ഥരചനയിൽ മലബാർ ബ്രാഹ്മണർ, നമ്പൂതിരിമാർ എന്നിവരും ഉൾപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നുവെന്നും രാജസദസ്സിലെ വൈദ്യവൃന്ദങ്ങളുടെ അംഗീകാരത്തോടുകൂടിയാണ് പല ഔഷധസസ്യങ്ങളുടെയും നാമങ്ങളും ഗുണങ്ങളും ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുത്തിയതെന്നും എഴുതിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. മാത്രമല്ല കൊങ്കണി വൈദ്യത്രയങ്ങൾ, നമ്പൂതിരിയാണോ എന്ന സംശയമുണ്ടെന്ന്* J Heniger *എഴുതിയ* **"Hendrik Adriaan Van Reed Tot Drakestein 1636-1691 and Hortus Malabaricus"** *എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിൽ കാണുന്നു.*

  [Free Translation: "Many commentaries cited that in the writing of the book, Malabar Brahmins, Namboodiris etc. were considered. With the permission of the physicians from the Royal services, many herbal medicines, their names, power and value were included in the book. Are the Konkani physicians Namboodiris? This is a doubtful statement, says J. Heniger in his book **Hendrik Adriaan Van Reed Tot Drakestein 1636-1691 and Hortus Malabaricus**]

If Malabar was only as it is now believed, one province of Kerala, as stated above, who are the Malabar Brahmins? We must know the difference between them and the Namboodiris. This raises the question whether they are Konkanis or Namboodiris, and implies that the commentator was not aware of the differences.

In the writing of the work, out of the group of 16, information is provided only

about four indigenous participants. About the others excluding the trio of physicians, are they from here or from outside. Wherever they come from there is no mention of Brahmins other than the trio. So, who aided Van Rheede in the writing of the *Hortus Malabaricus* saying that they were physicians from the Royal services? We must know.

In those days before the advent of paper money, an attender who carried and dispensed cash for the King belonged to the Konkani community and was designated as "Kizhikar". This name or term is found in Kochi only. Similarly in the Royal services it was quite possible that Konkanis could have been part of a group of Royal physicians.

- *"അവർ പറയുന്ന 'മഹാ നിഘണ്ടു' മലബാറിലെ ഔഷധ സസ്യങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചല്ല, മറ്റു പ്രദേശത്തെ ഔഷധ സസ്യങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചാണ് എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. പക്ഷെ അതിൽ കുറെ സസ്യങ്ങൾ മലബാറിലും കാണാം"* (മണിലാൽ – 1996). (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 25)
  [Free Translation: "The '*Manhaningattnam*' they talk of is not confined to the herbal wealth of Malabar alone, But that of other regions as well, but many of the medicinal plants included in it can be found in Malabar as well." (Manilal – 1996) [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 25]

In the document written in the Nagari script and signed by the trio of physicians, there is no mention of such a "*Nighantu*" or dictionary. This '*Manhaningattnam*' possibly is a figment of the translator's imagination.

From where did the translator get hold of this word, we must wonder. This word is found only in the translated document. It is possible that the Konkani Vaidyas or physicians did not have such a book to show at all and any attempt to try to search for it would get you nowhere. Carneiro has mentioned that Itty Achuthan also possessed or had accessed a famed volume on the subject, one on which everything was based, but he has not specified which one.

If the above conjecture is taken into account the above mentioned book contained all that was known on the medicinal plants of the land. Why then were the trio included in the book *"Hortus Malabaricus"* and in what way did they contribute?

Van Rheede had planned a compilation of a book on the medicinal plants of the Malabar region. "മലബാർ ഒരു വശത്തു കടലും മറുവശത്ത് മലകളു

മായുള്ള ഏകദേശം 120 ജർമ്മൻ മൈലുകൾ നീളവും (120 ജർമ്മൻ മൈൽ = 888 കി.മീ) 10 മുതൽ 30 മൈൽ വരെ വീതിയുമുള്ള ഒരു പ്രദേശമാണ്." (മണിലാൽ – 2003). [Free Translation: "The Malabar region with the ocean on one side and on the other side, the hills, has an approximate length of 120 German miles (888 Kms) and a width of 10 to 30 Miles." (Manilal – 2003)]. From this description we may comprehend that this region consisted not only of what is termed Malabar now, but the western coastal areas of South India from Goa to Kanyakumari. The Konkani trio of physicians were included in the group because they had a knowledge of the medicinal plants of the land from Goa onwards.

Again, the Konkanis traveled along the lands from Goa to Kerala and they were acquainted with members of the community and had friends in many of these places. Because several of the Brahmins who came to Cochin and those who stayed in Cochin were in the field of trade they could develop wider relationships. The Konkanis had a chance to get into the making of the book because of their connections with the community members who were probably with or knew the Cochin Royal physicians.

- *"മലബാറിന്റെ വിവിധ ഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള പണ്ഡിതന്മാരായിരുന്നതിനാൽ അവർ തമ്മിൽ പരിചയം ഇല്ലാത്തവരായിരുന്നു. അതിനാൽ ഒരാൾക്ക് എന്തെങ്കിലും പിഴവ് പറ്റിയാൽ അത് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുവാൻ മറ്റുള്ളവർക്ക് മടിയുണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല. തങ്ങൾക്കിടയിൽ തർക്കങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുമ്പോൾ അവർ പ്രാചീന ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിൽ നിന്നുള്ള ശ്ലോകങ്ങൾ ഉദ്ധരിച്ചാണ് വാദം നടത്തിയത്. ഔഷധസസ്യങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ശാസ്ത്ര ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ ശ്ലോകങ്ങളിലാണ് എഴുതപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നത്. ഒരു സസ്യത്തിന്റെ പേരുപ റഞ്ഞാൽ പിന്നെ അതിന്റെ സ്വഭാവവിശേഷങ്ങൾ, വിവിധ ഭാഗങ്ങളുടെ വർണ്ണന, വളരുന്ന കാലങ്ങൾ, സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ, ഔഷധഗുണങ്ങൾ, ഉപ യോഗങ്ങൾ എല്ലാം കൃത്യമായി ശ്ലോകങ്ങളിലൂടെ വിവരിക്കും... ഇവരുടെ ശാസ്ത്ര ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ 4000 വർഷം മുമ്പ് എഴുതപ്പെട്ടതാണ് എന്നാണ് ഇവർ അവകാശപ്പെടുന്നത്"* (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 15)
  [Free Translation: "Because scholars from various parts of Malabar had been included, the members of the group involved in the making of the book did not know each other. But if there was any error on the part of any one, the others did not hesitate to point it out and rectify it. When there were differences of opinion amongst them, they narrated relevant "slokas" or verses from old books and quoted them offering these quotations as proof. Old medical and scientific books were written in verse. The names of the medicinal herbs, their characteristics, their various parts, the description of these parts, the season when they grew and the place where they grew, their medicinal value and use, were all described

in verse. Their scientific books, they stated were written 4000 years ago." [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 15]

Even if they were unfamiliar or unknown to each other, the three physicians joined together and signed a common testimony, referring to themselves as "We" – in Konkani "आमि" (āmi). How did they write this? The Commander of Cochin, Van Rheede himself in his own statement has mentioned that they were unknown to each other. Contrary to this, the three established their position before Van Rheede as one – "We" – and prepared a joint testimony, acquiring a special place in the book. This establishes their position.

Of the indigenous physicians – only four are mentioned – Itty Achuthan alone is described by historians as an established physician. The reference to the quoting of "slokas" or verses and from the debate they entered into we can suppose that there was more than a single scholarly physician. Out of this Itty Achuthan was one and the others we may believe were the three Konkani Brahmins. Whether Brahmins from Kerala such as the Namboodiris or from other sects were included has not been mentioned.

If "slokas" or verses from books which were 4000 years old existed, they could not have been in Malayalam. No historian would give credence to a statement which implied that such old books in Malayalam were available. If the books were so ancient they would, we must believe have been in Sanskrit or Tamil, and if such ancient books were there, in the Tamil language, they belonged to the pre-Sangam age. If so, then that language would be known only to Itty Achuthan. Then how were the debates conducted. This is a point which should be considered.

If the "slokas" or verses quoted were Sanskrit "slokas", Itty Achuthan and the physician trio must have possibly conducted a debate in Sanskrit. If so, a question arises. We would deduce that Itty Achuthan was a Sanskrit Pandit or scholar. This fact is mentioned nowhere. Not only this, it is possible that he did not even know the "Aryezhuthu" Malayalam script. Again we must look into the social backdrop of the times. Of the other physicians – the trio were Brahmins – and of them one was a Pandit. (In those days, "Pandit" was a title given to a Sanskrit Vidwan or scholar). Even if we do not take the title into consideration we may intelligently conclude that the trio were Brahmins and therefore they had some knowledge of Sanskrit. If so, were they the only ones who participated in the debate? In my opinion, the trio, quoting Sanskrit "slokas" debated amongst themselves or debated with Itty Achuthan placing the evidence before him and convinced him.

If their books were 4000 years old, historians and Indian researchers should ask themselves why these have been left unresearched for so long. Why is it believed that there is no such book. In the testimony document on Itty Achuthan, it is stated that he had a famed book to his credit. In the translation of the trio's testimony an authoritative book is clearly mentioned. Why had the Portuguese and the Dutch tried to prove that an authoritative work was used as a source book?

- *"ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസിന്റെ ഒന്നാം വാല്യത്തിന്റെ മുൻ പേജുകളിൽ കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്ന ആറ് സാക്ഷ്യപത്രങ്ങളിൽ നാലും ഇട്ടി അച്ച്യുതനെ സംബന്ധിക്കുന്നതാണ്."* (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 23)
  [Free Translation: "In the first volume of Hortus Malabaricus, six testimonies are given in three pages of which four deal with Itty Achuthan." [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 23]

That the translator, Emmanuel Carneiro knew any Indian language except Malayalam is not mentioned anywhere, though he is credited with having had a very good knowledge of Malayalam. This could have been a reason why he never translated the Konkani testimony. The Portuguese Carneiro could have had for historical reasons disliked the Konakni language. As we know Konkani in the Devanagari script was banned in Goa in the 16th Century. It is possible that he would not have translated a testimony in the Konkani language written in Devanagari script. This could explain why the Konkani testimony has rarely been discussed.

Another noticeable point is that the names of the pictured herbs were in "Aryezhuthu" script – a script that Itty Achuthan was not familiar with. In a book whose contents are in the "Aryezhuthu" script was signed by Itty Achuthan. Did Itty Achuthan sign his testimony without knowing the exact content? It is possible that no one in the Commission ascertained the truth or falsity of what was written.

- ഇട്ടി അച്ചുതൻ സ്വന്തം കൈപ്പടയിലെഴുതിയ സാക്ഷ്യപത്രത്തിൽ *".....ഹെൻറിക് വാൻ റീഡ് കോമ്മഡോറുടെ കല്പന അനുസരിച്ച് കോട്ടയിൽ വന്ന് പുസ്തകത്തിൽ വിവരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള വൃക്ഷങ്ങളും, ചെറുവൃക്ഷങ്ങളും, വള്ളികളും, പുൽക്കുലകളും, വിത്തുജാതികളും......... മുതലായതും വേർതിരിച്ച് ചിത്രത്തിൽ കാണിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നവിധവും വ്യവസ്ഥ വരുത്തി ചിട്ടയായി ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട കമ്പനിയുടെ ദ്വിഭാഷിയായ മാനുവൽ കർണ്ണെരോയോട് വിവരിച്ച് പറഞ്ഞറിയിച്ചതാണ് ....."* (ഹോർത്തൂസ് മലബാറിക്കൂസ് – മലബാറിലെ സസ്യസമ്പത്ത് – പേജ് 23, 24)
  [Free Translation: Itty Achuthan in his handwritten testimony has noted

that "according to the order of Hendrik Van Rheede, Commodore, he came to the Fort to identify the plants written about in the book – the different types of small trees, creepers, flowers, seeds etc, separating them as was drawn in the pictures, getting them into the right order, neatly and through the honourable Company's translator Emmanuel Carneiro, he described them in detail and made them known." [**Hortus Malabaricus – Malabarile Sasya Sampathu** – Page 23]

He came to the Fort and identified and described for the books the herbs, small trees, creepers etc. From this statement we may believe that the book had already been prepared without any doubt or controversy and the herbs were separated and as in the pictures put in order.

There is no mention in this testimony that either Itty Achuthan or Carneiro, learning from him the names of the herbs and translating them spent two years on the work. Again "coming to the Fort" (they do not mention how long they stayed there), looking at the drawn pictures from his own knowledge, he straight away gave the information to Carneiro is what is implied in this testimony.

Then who procured the trees and creepers, plants, seeds etc, keeping in view their seasons and time and brought them over and got them picturized? If we consider it this way, then in the testimony in Konkani it is mentioned that one who knew about trees and plants was sent to procure them, the information was gathered, the value of the plants was researched, scrutinized and on this task a period of two years was spent and pictures were drawn of them.

Reasons to be Investigated

- **Reason why Konkanis were included in this book**

Before the publication of the Hortus Malabaricus, two books on similar themes had been published. If all these are considered together one would perceive the existence of a three cornered triangle – that of the Portuguese, Goa and Konkani connects them – a fact that has hitherto gone unnoticed. In Garcia da Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicinais da Índia*, the names of the medicinal plants were written in Konkani in the Roman script because Konkani in the Nagari script was suppressed in Goa. The second book *Tratado de las drogas y medicinas de las Indias Orientales* by Cristóbal de Acosta is based on the herbs and plants of the Goa region. In the third book *Hortus Malabaricus* Konkani and Konkanis are included. It should not come as a surprise at all.

- **Reason for the use of the Konkani Nagari script in the *Hortus Malabaricus***

In the books mentioned above, published before the Hortus Malabaricus, even if Konkani was used it was in the Roman script. Moreover the two books were by the Portuguese. So to show that the *Hortus Malabaricus* was more authoritative, the Dutch, their rivals and enemies used the language of the Brahmins in the Nagari script itself, and in their own handwriting and sent it to Europe.

- **Reason for terming Konkani "the Brahmin Language"**

Why did they choose Konkani over Sanskrit or any other indigenous language? They selected Konkani because in the opinion of the Portuguese and the other Europeans of that time, the Konkani language written in the Nagari script was the "Brahmin language" (*Lingua Brahmana*). They did not refer to it as Konkani but as the "Brahmin" language.

- **Reason why Malayalam "*Aryezhuthu*" was used instead of "*Kolezhuthu*"**

Whether they were published by the Portuguese or the Dutch, these books were for their own use specifically. In that age, in Europe there was little familiarity with the Malayalam language and any script whether "*Kolezhuthu*" or "*Aryezhuthu*" did not matter. Vinayak Pandit wrote in the Nagari script. Similarly, Itty Achuthan wrote in his own handwriting in "*Kolezhuthu*". If the pictures had titles they would carry greater authority.

From his own testimony we knew that Itty Achuthan knew the "*Kolezhuthu*" script. There is no clear evidence that he knew "*Aryezhuthu*". On each illustrated page, every picture of the herbs had the name of the herb given in Malayalam in *Aryezhuthu*. Emmanuel Carneiro was familiar with "*Aryezhuthu*" and each illustrated page has the name of the pictured herbs in Malayalam in his own handwriting. This is a testimony that he knew the "*Aryezhuthu*" script.

The names of the herbs are given in Konkani, Portuguese, Latin, Dutch and Arabic language together with Malayalam. Rather than making Itty Achuthan write, Carneiro wrote the names in Malayalam in his own handwriting and these names were in the "*Aryezhuthu*" script. This handwritten exertion gave him a special and unique position in the book. By bringing out the *Hortus Malabaricus*, the Dutch were already trying to steal a march over the Portuguese. They were trying to show the world that they had outdone the Portuguese. In such a great endeavour, a man who came from the enemy or rival

camp, a Portuguese, Emmanuel Carneiro, could show that he had an important position in its making. His position as translator provided him with this opportunity.

One way of getting into the book and consolidating his position was by using the language of the land, Malayalam. If the Malayalam was written in the "Aryezhuthu" script, only then would Carneiro's handwriting be included in the book. If Itty Achuthan the Malayali Vaidyan or physician knew the "Aryezhuthu" script, Carneiro's ploy would not have worked. (Though Konkani was a regional language that was included in the book, it was designated as the language of the Brahmins as already stated above).

Perhaps this was a reason why Itty Achuthan who did not know "Aryezhuthu" was included in the group. Itty Achuthan has been associated with a book but he has not mentioned its name. At the same time in the testimony written by the Konkanis they have not spoken of any (particular) book. (But) "*Manhaningattnam*" has been mentioned and included only in the translation of the testimony.

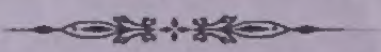
It must be noted that neither the Konkanis, nor Itty Achuthan talk of themselves as great physicians etc. Carneiro goes on declaring that Itty Achuthan was a famed physician. This would have given him a chance to achieve a place in the group and to get his (Carneiro's) handwriting included in the book *Hortus Malabaricus*. At the very outset Carneiro had possibly informed the Dutch that it was better to use "*Aryezuthu*" instead of "*Kolezhuthu*", so he who knew the former script would acquire a special position by having his handwritten work incorporated in the book.

Conclusion

Behind the writing of that great work, the *Hortus Malabaricus* or behind any great task, proper team work is essential. Neither Van Rheede, the Dutch Commander, nor Emmanuel Carneiro, nor Itty Achuthan, nor the three physicians, nor anyone else would have, standing alone, been able to emerge as successful as they did, in the task they undertook. It would not have been possible. It was their combined effort which produced results and brought them victory. But while considering this product of combined effort, it would be unjust to give prominence to one person only. This would be twisting historical truth. It is to point out this fallacy that I wrote this book. I have underlined this point by quoting from history itself. Truth may not always fit one's liking. I have tried to illuminate certain historical facts by presenting them before you and bringing them to your notice.

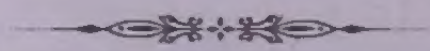
Itty Achuthan and the three physicians have played equally important roles in the compilation of the *Hortus Malabaricus* and their work must be treated on an equal scale. The trio were also born and brought up in Kerala, so why have they been given less importance or been forgotten is question which Keralites must ask themselves. If we look at history we will see that Konkanies have rendered service in many sectors but their contribution has often been neglected.

Weighing the justice and injustice meted out in the light of the facts given above, we should re-examine them in a fresh way and do greater research on them in the future. I hope that this work that I have done and present before you will be a useful pointer in this direction.



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Itty Achuthan

Hendrik Adriaan Van Rheede tot Draakenstein

HORTUS MALABARICUS and the Contribution of Konkanis

...cate in Konkani lang...

...Bhat, Vinayaka Pandit & Ap...

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